

Catholic Church Records: Marriages

Latin America “How to” Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

March 2016

GOAL

This guide will teach you how to extract genealogical information from a Spanish marriage record by identifying key words and phrases.

INTRODUCTION

The majority of the paragraph form Spanish marriage records follow a particular format, though they may vary by parish or country.

You may want to consult the following “How to” Guides before continuing:

- [Reading Spanish Handwritten Records](#)
- [Inserting Special Characters](#)

HOW TO

Before you begin extracting genealogical information from documents written in Spanish, it is important to understand the endings of nouns and adjectives.

In Spanish, nouns and adjectives have either a masculine or a feminine ending. Masculine nouns and adjectives generally end in –o, while feminine nouns and adjectives generally end in –a. Additionally, articles have a masculine and feminine form; the articles must match the gender. Masculine nouns and adjectives generally use the article *el*, while the feminine nouns and adjectives use the article *la*. In baptism, marriage, and death records, you typically find the relationship indicators like *hijo* (child), *esposo* (spouse), or *viudo* (widower). These words usually describe the main person in the records. They reflect the pattern of masculine and feminine word endings, as the table below indicates:

Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English
<i>el hijo</i>	the son	<i>el esposo</i>	the husband	<i>el viudo</i>	the widower
<i>la hija</i>	the daughter	<i>la esposa</i>	the wife	<i>la viuda</i>	the widow

This is an important distinction when trying to learn the sex of a person from the records, as most Spanish names have a male and female version. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the difference between a handwritten o or a. If you have a hard time reading the ending, the articles of the paragraph might also be able to help you distinguish the sex of the person.

Sample Paragraph Marriage Record

30 ✓ ¹ En esta Parroquia Exlesia de S. Lorenzo de los M.
Galeano ² los diez y muere de Nófil de mil novecientos dos, 70,
 con el Cura P., corridas las tres conciliares proclama segun
Antonia derecho practicada las demas formalidades de ley, ⁴ no
Ignacia resultando impedimento alguno canonico, ⁵ case in facie
Vera. Exlesia a Vicente Galeano, ⁶ soltero, mayor ⁷ de edad,
⁸ natural y vecino de Alto, ⁹ hijo natural de Felipa Ga
leano, ¹⁰ viviente, previo consentimiento materno, ¹¹ con
Antonia Ignacia Vera, ¹² soltera, menor ¹³ de edad, del
mismo Departamento y vecindad, ¹⁴ hija natural
de Serapia Vera, ¹⁵ viviente, previo consentimiento
materno.
 Recibieron las bendiciones solemne en la
 Mesa Nupcial conferaron y comulgaron siendo ¹⁶ testiga
 del acto Miguel Alfaro y Mercedes Gomez de San
Diego.
 Ramon V. z. Prior
 cura P.

Source: <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GRG8-9PG4> : accessed 24 March 2016.

Paragraph Marriage Record Outline in English

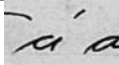
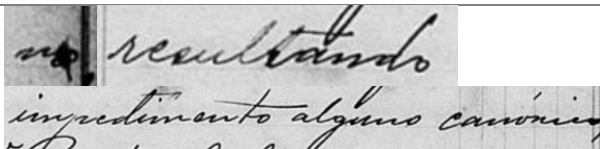
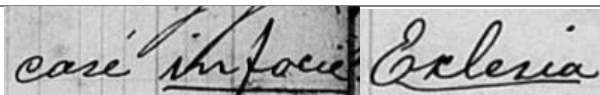
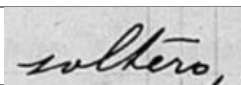
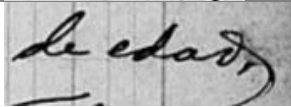
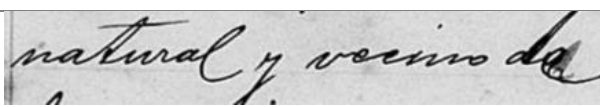
In this parish church¹ (location), the² (full date written out, usually day, month, year),
 (information about the priest) published the three marriage banns³ according to the practice and
 other formalities of the law and no canonical impediments resulted⁴ I married in front of the
 Church⁵ (name of groom), (marital status)⁶, (years) of age⁷, native and resident of⁸ (name of the
 city) illegitimate son of⁹ (name of mother) living¹⁰ previously given mother's consent with¹¹
 (name of bride), (marital status)¹², (a minor) of age¹³, (resident information) illegitimate daughter
 of¹⁴ (name of mother) living¹⁵ previously given mother's consent. They received the blessings in
 the marriage mass, they confessed and partook of the Eucharist being witnesses¹⁶.

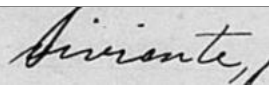
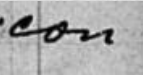
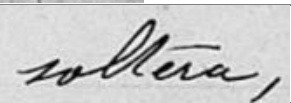
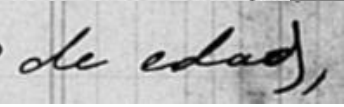
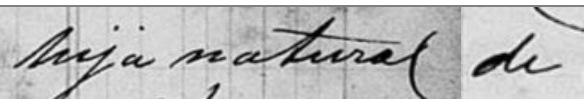
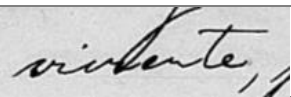
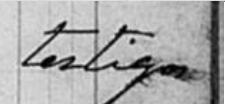
Margins

As in the marriage record above, the couple's names are often recorded in the margin. Sometimes the surnames are not included. Keep in mind the name may be abbreviated (for example, M^a for María).

Key Words

The following key words will indicate the most essential genealogical information. Depending on the context, the information may come before or after the key word. Note that the Spanish words and phrases are written in standardized Spanish. In some cases, the examples provided may differ in spelling, diacritics, or conjugation of the word. Keep in mind that phrases and even words may be split between two lines.

English	Spanish	Information given	Example
1. In this parish church...	En esta Parroquial Iglesia...	<u>followed</u> by the name of the parish and possibly the town	
2. the...	a...	<u>followed</u> by the date	
3. three marriage banns...	tres conciliares proclama...	<u>followed</u> by the dates the banns were posted (this record does not list the dates)	
4. there were no canonical impediments	No resultando impedimento alguno canónico	If there is an impediment, it is usually due to consanguinity (blood relationship)	
5. I married in front of the Church...	Case <u>in facie</u> <u>Eclesia</u> (Latin words underlined)	<u>followed</u> by the groom's information	
6. single	soltero	marital status of the groom	
7. ...of age	...de edad	<u>before</u> this phrase is the age (sometimes given as adult or minor)	
8. native and resident of...	Natural y vecino de...	<u>followed</u> by location of birth and residence	
9. illegitimate son of...	hijo natural de...	legal status, <u>followed</u> by the names of the groom's parents	

10. living	vivente	current status of the parent(s)	
11. with...	con...	<u>followed</u> by bride's information	
12. single	soltera	indicates marital status of the bride	
13. ...of age	...de edad	<u>before</u> this phrase is the age (sometimes given as adult or minor)	
14. illegitimate daughter of...	hija natural de...	legal status, <u>followed</u> by the names of the bride's parents	
15. living	vivente	current status of the parent(s)	
16. witnesses	testigos...	<u>followed</u> by information about the witnesses	

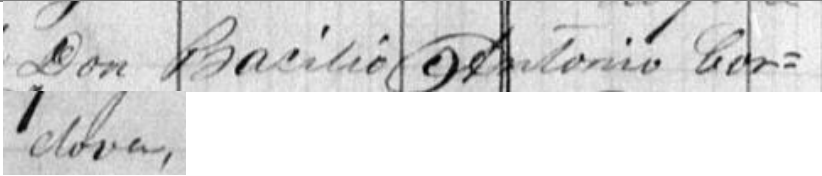
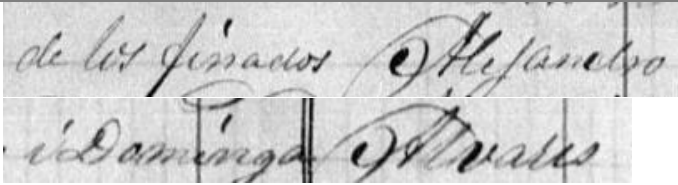
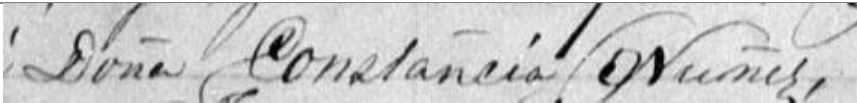
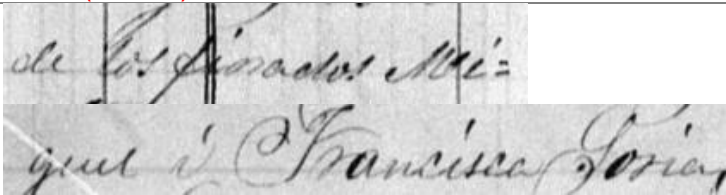
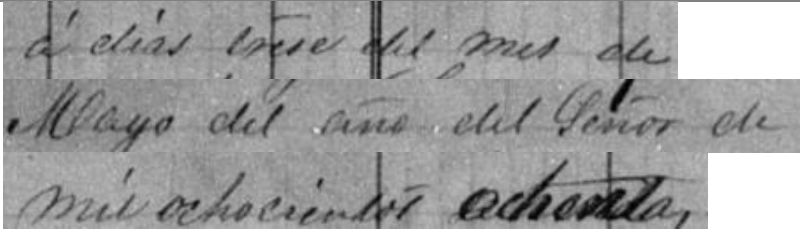
Other Helpful Vocabulary Words

Before the name of a specific place is mentioned, you will see a word describing the type of location (i.e. "village" or "city"). After the groom's name it will state whether he is a bachelor or a widower. Following the bride's name they will state whether she was a spinster or a widow. When recording the parents of the bride and groom, the word "deceased" is usually added before the names if they are deceased.

village	pueblo
city	ciudad
gave a dispensation	dispensó
consanguinity	consanguinidad
affinity	afinidad
made a dispensation	dispensaron (se hizo dispensa)
Sir / Ma'am (honorific title indicating respect)	Don / Doña
native (born in)	natural de
originated (born in)	originario(a) de
resident	vecino de
bachelor	soltero
bachelorette	soltera
widow	viuda
widower	viudo
living	viviente
deceased	difunto
deceased	finado
legitimate child	hijo(a) legítimo(a)
illegitimate child	hijo(a) natural

PRACTICE

The last page of this guide contains an image of a marriage record. You can also view the image on FamilySearch by clicking [here](#). For any unfamiliar words, use the FamilySearch word list, found at: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Spanish_Genealogical_Word_List

What is the groom's name?	Look for the key word a .	 Don (Sir) Bacilio Antonio Cordova
What are the groom's parents' names?	Look for the key words hijo legítimo . The parents' names follow, including if they are living or deceased	 The [both] deceased Alejandro [Cordova] and Dominga Alvares
What is the bride's name?	Look for the key word a	 Doña (Ma'am) Constanacia Nuñez
What is the bride's parents' names?	Look for the key words hija legítima . The parents' names follow, including if they are living or deceased	 The [both] deceased Miguel [Nuñez] and Francisca Soria
When did the marriage take place?	Look in the first two lines of the entry. The date is written out.	 dias trece del mes de Mayo del año del Señor de mil ochocientos ochenta – 13 May 1880.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.

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En esta Iglesia Parroquial de Ancaes, a dias trece del mes de Mayo del año del Señor de mil ochocientos ochenta, habiendose (Gordova, de la Nacionalidad) seguido la informacion de soltura i libertad en que fueron dos argentinos de edad 38 años, hijos de Juan y Maria, de estado casado, y Segundo Acevedo de profesion labrador color blanco, soltero, ambos vecinos de "Hauze Guascho", i habiendo requerido: con Dña Consuelo un impedimento de afinidad i lincea en primer grado con Francisca Munos Argentina, lincea colateral igual, el mismo que fue dispensado por el Señor Obispo de Salta Sr. Buenaventura Riso, como consta de sustitucion ninguna, color blanco } tras fecha veintinueve de Marzo de mil ochocientos ochenta, i publicadas las proclamas intra muros parrochialis solemniter en los dias festivos que fueron el primero el veinticinco de Abril el segundo el dos de Mayo i el tercero el seis, de las cuales no resultó impedimento. Yo el cura pntorino de esta Parroquia pregunté de su consentimiento a Don Basilio Antonio Gordova, hijo legitimo de los finados Manuel i Dominga Munos i a Dña Constanacia Munos, hija legitima de los finados Miguel i Francisca Joria, ambos vecinos de las "Caseras Viejas" de este Curato, i expresado por ambos el consentimiento mutuo por palabras de presentir, los uní en matrimonio, siendo testigos Manuel Loba i Rita Saabedra, conyuges i vecinos de esta Parroquia, casi i hize las de mas ceremonias prebenidas por el Ritual Eclesiastico i comulgaron en su Misa - Para que conste lo firmo

Prest. Jos. B. Medina